



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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Six More Birds Test Positive for West Nile virus

Aerial larvicides applications effective in minimizing virus in San Diego County

County Vector Control officials announced today that six additional dead birds tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing San Diego County's West Nile virus count to 25 dead birds and two horses. The birds were collected from September 14th through the 18th from Dulzura, El Cajon, Ramona, Ranchita, Santee and Palomar Mountain.

"In spite of these recent positive findings, our aggressive aerial larvicidal attacks on mosquitoes seem to be working. We have been treating known mosquito-breeding wetlands for the past five months and find that mosquito populations have been reduced 80% to 90%," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.

To date, San Diego County Vector Control has collected and submitted for testing 272 dead birds. Only 25 of these birds, plus two horses, have tested positive for West Nile virus. California has been severely impacted by the virus. While San Diego County has no locally acquired human illnesses, there have been 643 human illnesses and 17 deaths in California, primarily in Southern California.

Vector Control continues to pick up and test crows, ravens, jays, hawks, owls, and falcons to monitor the spread of the virus. The public is encouraged to report dead birds if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants or flies; are not stiff; and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals. Placing a bag of ice over the bird will help to preserve it until Vector Control staff can collect the specimen for testing. All other dead birds should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded in a covered trash can. While you cannot get West Nile virus from dead birds, wear disposable gloves if you must handle birds.

You can protect yourself from the virus by: staying inside at dawn and dusk; wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors; and by using an insect repellent containing DEET when you must be outdoors. Keep screens on doors and windows and make sure they are in good repair. For more information on West Nile virus, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636). You can also visit the official County West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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